551 645 [134] (b) Kata laghem koagb'kon sirigh tanga. (A hundred barking hyenas cannot shake a mountain.)

6. Kamsoro Naba (Ouene Nongué), Naba Niouga ("cat"). He is chief eunuch. Nioug'nok wendé na pa ne Sabelem. (A cat who trusts in God is sure to preserve his blackness.) In other words, one who is protected by the Mogho Naba, his "God," will never lack for anything; everything will come to him as if by magic.

551 643 835 7. Naba Gnighnemdo (Mogho Naba). Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, fell in love with one of his own daughters and had intercourse with her. The girl became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The wives of Naba Oubri wanted to put both the child and the mother to death. They asked the girl the name of the child's father, and she replied, "Ask my father, he ought to know." When Oubri was questioned, he answered: "Bassi yan ya mam lam gnighnemdo (Do nothing, this is my own flesh)."

The child of this incestuous union was thus named Gnighnemdo and later succeeded his relative, Naba Nasbiré.

The Placing of Statues at Loumbi-Raogo

211 306 532 Ganlougdou. In the old days, upon the death of a Mogho Naba or soon after, a jeweler was called in [135] to make a wax statuette, later to be cast in bronze, in the likeness of the late chief. The jeweler also made statuettes of one soroné, one napagha, one bendré, and one lounga, and all were deposited at the home [177] of the Loumbila Naba. This practice was suppressed upon the arrival of the French, and it appears that there is no statue of Naba Siguiri, father of Naba Kom, the present naba, at Loumbila.

The acting Mogho Naba is never supposed to see these statues, and the jeweler who made the likeness of his father must not see them either. The jeweler was paid 100,000 cowries, a horse, a donkey, [135] a cow, a wife, a large robe, and 1,000 kola nuts, and he was then sent away from Ouagadougou. He must never return and must never see the new Mogho Naba.

These gifts represented a considerable sum in the old days, even today for that matter. They were given to aid the jeweler in consulting seers and charlatans for the purpose of prolonging his life. Tradition has it that unless he followed faithfully the prescriptions given by the seers, he would die within a year after completing the statues.

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

291 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

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554 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between
435 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

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554 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The
177 various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese
[362] traders). Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings,
[494] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo [411] (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 554 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 177 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by [352] elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 178 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now considered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes.

The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
444 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a
● [436] kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

669 The last wars in the Koupéla area, therefore, were all civil wars that broke out upon the death of chiefs in the adjacent regions of Koupéla, Fada, and Tenkodogo.

721 The most usual theater of warfare, however, was Bousanga /Busansi/ country. If a Bousanga woman enslaved to the naba of Koupéla ran away, the naba demanded her return. If his request was turned down, this meant war. When the Mossi ran short of millet, when their herds had been decimated by an epizootic disease, or even simply when they wished to obtain slaves, the naba would assemble his ministers and direct them to raid the Bousansé. The Saman'Naba would take [701] charge of the war. The Trabana, an experienced warrior, acted as chief of staff, and all the other chiefs, heads of cantons and villages; assembled their men. This was a festive occasion, and its abolition is still lamented by many people, especially among the chiefs.

721 Everything was looted; the harvest and herds were shared, and the 567 population was reduced to slavery. Since we have mentioned slaves, we shall provide some details on the subject.

567 Slavery existed in Mossi country, but in a very mild form. The agricultural Mossi kept slaves to till their fields. It was to their advantage to treat them well and thus turn them to good account.

● [435] Slaves constituted a source of wealth. An adult slave sold for 50 to 100 francs according to his strength, and no distinction was made between men and women. It was, therefore, unusual for a Mossi to kill a slave. Custom certainly sanctioned his right to do so, and no one, not even his chief, could call him to account for his act; his slave was his property, and he could do with him as he pleased. When he wished to get rid of a slave, however, he found it more lucrative to sell him. Besides, a slave should be attached to the household; a [278] maltreated slave might run away, even at the risk of being caught and in spite of the drug he was forced to drink, which, like the Lethean waters, was supposed to cause him to lose his memory. On the other hand, a well-treated, well-fed slave had the hope of obtaining a wife and becoming in turn the master of a hut. When his master was pleased with him, when he had rendered an important service, he was sometimes given one of the master's daughters in marriage; this made him free, and his children were not born slaves. Slaves could also be freed if their family agreed to redeem them. They were freed most frequently by means of an exchange: one of their daughters, sisters, or nieces was given in their place. This custom persisted until quite recently.

443 why only a native who is used to the transactions and who frequents the market regularly would be able to estimate the amount of business carried out on the marketplace itself and in its neighborhood; he would also have to take into account the off season, which exists here as in any other trading center. (1)

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1. I shall list below, for what they are worth, the approximate prices of some goods; they apply to a year of average yield and were recorded shortly after the harvest. Prices increase rapidly as harvest time recedes into the past, and during famine years there is no set price.

Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; fabirama, 0.05 franc a kilogram; karite butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer (tõsé), containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel (bẽsé), 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs for a ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; a head of small cattle (no hump), 50 francs; zebu, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; sheep skin, 0.50 franc; cowhide, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc a piece; one hoe, 0.50 franc; clothes: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; shirt, medium size, 2.50 francs.

443 /54/ These large markets are in the minority. In the village markets the transactions are carried out between natives who know each other, and they deal almost exclusively in native goods: millet,

439 As far as onions are concerned, the Mossi are familiar with
262 them and call them albasalé, but do not cultivate them. It is the Haoussa, on their way in from Bandiagara, who buy them from the Habé and bring them to the Mossi. The growers themselves sometimes come in large caravans and sell them at Ouagadougou.

248 /484/ We are now finished with the Mossi food crops. Let us proceed to other crops.

Cotton (lamdo or lango in Mossi) is a dry-season crop here rather than a rainy-season crop.

It is planted near the soukala, or else in the bush along the watercourses.

During the winter season, grass along watercourses is cut down and left lying there to fertilize the ground. Then cotton is planted at the end of the rainy season. Holes are made into the earth with the koutiaga, three or four cotton seeds are placed in each hole and then covered up. The cotton emerges from the ground at the end of five or six days. Weeds are pulled out every fortnight. The cotton ripens at the end of 100 days. The stem may reach 75 centimeters or 1.50 meters in height, depending on the quality of the soil. Then comes the harvesting, which extends over a period of thirty or forty days, because one must wait for the pod to burst and the boll to appear before plucking. The women, girls, and small boys do this plucking.

The Mossi grow a considerable amount of cotton and take very good care of their fields. In any case, the soil and climate of the region are rather propitious to this crop. The harvesting is done in February and March. The average local price of cotton is one franc
●[435] a kilogram.

249 Tobacco is also partly a dry-season crop. At least its cultivation begins during the rainy season, extends into the dry season, and ends only in the latter. Tobacco is grown near the soukala like maize, large red millet, hemp, etc.

Tobacco is sown during the rainy season near the soukala. Twenty-five days are allowed to elapse, and then the plants are dug out and transplanted to another spot near the soukala. When the

563 From a political standpoint, they were subject to the high Mossi powers just like the Yarsé, but like the latter and aside from this, they had preserved all their personal and economic freedom.

231 Let us add a few words about the various races of livestock which are to be found in Mossi territory.

As far as cattle is concerned, there are three races in the Ouagadougou circle:

1. Humped cattle, which is found mostly in the northern and eastern parts of the circle. This beef is tall, with a short dewlap and large horns. It is well suited to porterage, and furnishes excellent butcher's meat. There are some 5,000 head of humped cattle in the circle, 2,000 males and 3,000 females.

2. Humpless or local cattle. This beef has small horns, is found chiefly in the western and southwestern regions, and is usually designated by the name of Kipirsi cattle. It is not suited to porterage and yields inferior meat, but it is much stronger than the humped beef and better adapted to the climate.

3. Ordinary cattle, the result of a cross between the two preceding species. This beef has the strength of the Kipirsi cattle and is considerably taller. It is, furthermore, capable of being fattened, and can thus furnish meat of very good quality. This type predominates among the Tenkodogo Mossi. It comprises about 20,000 head, 8,000 males and 12,000 females.

It is therefore the local cattle (71,000 head), which is most numerous. The humped beeves are worth from 40 to 100 francs, [435] /489/ and the humpless beeves from 30 to 40 francs. The natives [232] are familiar with castration but practice it at random on any subject that comes to hand.

231 Prior to the arrival of the French, the Mossi used their cattle for 782 meat and for sacrifices, but the two uses really amounted to one 651 (the former) since the animals offered to a dead person are always eaten by the living. Nowadays, the Mossi sell their cattle to pay their tax. They still eat meat, although apparently not as much as before. The need to pay a tax which has been understood imperfectly, raised too rapidly and levied too harshly over the past few years, has forced them to save their cattle in order to sell it on the southern kola markets.

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [232 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse 435 is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 435] animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

235 The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 492] ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

231 237 These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey, [262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also 272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, [435] which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

231 64 inhabitants among the nakomsé (nobles, descendants of chiefs, true Mossi). The Dagari and Nounouma, on the other hand, have one horse per 1,000 inhabitants, the Sissala one per 400, the Kassonboura one per 300. The Yarsé, who are in better circumstances than the common Mossi but less fond of horses than the nakomsé, have one horse per 100 people. Finally, the Foulbé of Mossi territory, who raise horses, have one for every 26 people.

To summarize, Mossi stockbreeding is mediocre except for donkeys and horses. Let us proceed to the hunt.

224 First of all, like the Gourounsi and all other populations of West Africa, the Mossi hunt collectively during the dry, warm season.

/494/ This collective endeavor is their chief hunting method.

Aside from this, the cultivators hunt individually with bow and arrow, chiefly during the dry season although sometimes also during the damp season.

Finally, there are a few elephant hunters in the southern regions. They are to be found only in the south, for in Mossi territory proper the relative density of the population and resulting extent of cultivated land make for a nearly total absence of elephants. Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, on the other hand, which are much less densely populated, include some deserted areas where elephants may be found. Mossi hunters, therefore, have settled in the southern part of the territory, on the borders of Gourounsi and Boussansé lands, to scour both regions /for elephants/.

At Kombisiguiri, for example, there are ten of them, ten soukala heads. They kill one or two elephants a year on the average. They sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot [435] where the animal was killed. This nets them about 50,000 cowries. As for the tusks, they sell them for 120,000 or 140,000 cowries, sometimes 200,000. They always give a piece of the meat to the chief of the canton where the animal was killed. They hunt with [411] guns, while in the old days they hunted with poisoned spears but on the same individual basis as they do now.

[463] Elephant hunters do not cultivate the soil during the winter season, but their wives and children do.

224 435 At Kombisiguiri, as we have just seen, there are 10 elephant hunters out of about 70 chiefs of compounds. Among the latter there are also some 20 men who hunt other animals, but they are cultivators who hunt on the side. They seek buffalo. When they kill one, they sell the meat to the village that stands nearest to the spot of the kill for 35,000 cowries. They also hunt the koba antelope, whose meat is worth from 20,000 cowries, the striped deer worth 6,500, the pig deer worth 5,000, the wart hog worth 10,000. They also hunt hares, bustards, guinea fowl, partridges, turtle-doves, etc.

224 262 The Mossi do not hunt monkeys and do not eat them. /495/ Actually, there are very few in Mossi territory, except for the red-haired monkeys who are great lovers of millet and maize.

224 825 778 The Mossi do not hunt crocodiles because the latter are held sacred. If one were to kill a crocodile, one would become ill, one's head would swell and one's teeth would fall out. Snakes, on the other hand, are killed and eaten, but in Mossi territory proper there are few large ones (pythons, boas) because the climate is not sufficiently humid. They are more numerous in Boussansé and Gourounsi lands.

226 Fishing is less important than hunting among the Mossi, for the simple reason that the land, with its low rainfall, only has muddy ponds during the dry season (on this subject, see our Introduction /not translated/). Thus, not only do the Mossi lack professional fishermen, but the villages do not even undertake collective fishing during the dry season (with the exception of some southern localities, in Kombisiguiri for example). Only children attempt to catch the mudfish which are always present in large quantities in small ponds, even when they are nearly dry.

222 Gathering, on the other hand, plays the same role among the Mossi as among the other Sudanese Blacks, and we shall study it here in some detail, since we have only described it in broad outline so far.

222 137 The tree most widespread throughout Mossi territory, and which grows wild, is the karité. Its leaves are a pleasant green, and it is somewhat similar to our Normandy apple tree. Its bark is whitish and made of small juxtaposed quadrilaterals. It is the karité which

252 261 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set 252 263 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are [435] worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 291 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

222 and very peculiar fruit. The latter, which grows at the tip of
137 young boughs, is shaped like a huge pod whose pulpy valves open when pressure is exercised along the convex ridge. Its free tip is equipped with a sort of pulpy appendage shaped like a thorn, about 0.06 meter in length. When ripe, the fruit is of a distinctive light-red color. It contains a dozen polyhedral seeds immersed in a yellowish flesh which is tasty and highly fragrant. It is one of the best desserts I came across in the Sudan, and we often feasted on it. The fruits are clustered in bunches of three, five, or seven, and strongly fastened to the peduncle and stem that hold them. They rarely fall, and in order to gather them one must break the bough that bears them."

André Rançon adds (page 36) that the n'taba is related to the kola nut. It is apparently a sort of false kola tree.

The n'taba fruits ripen from December to April. The Mossi and Gourounsi eat them when they have dried out on the tree, or
65 else as they come /fresh/, or after boiling them for a quarter of an
435 hour. They are sold on Mossi markets at the price of three for 1 cowrie, six for 2 cowries, etc., that is to say, 150 for 1 sou.

272 These fruits are also used to prepare a drink among the Mossi and Gourounsi. They are boiled, mashed, placed in a canari filter, that is, a canari perforated at the bottom which is placed on top of another canari. Water is poured upon the fruits /507/, becomes permeated with the juice, and passes on to the bottom canari. This drink is sweet and tastes like honey.

222 Let us cite also the kamsoro (n'kodo in Bambara). It is a very
137 big, thickset tree, with characteristic leaves. The latter are very tough, very large, very thick, their shape ovoidal or rather a little more elongated than an egg, and their color a brilliant green.

The fruits of this tree are eaten throughout the year, especially by children, because ripe ones are to be found at all times.

There are no kamsoro in Gourounga territory.

Let us also cite the véda or ouéda, the caoutchouc liana, called n'saba in Mandé, fôgui in Peuhl, fittigné in Sarakolé, which is also called laré and Vahea senegalensis. This liana bears fruits that ripen in March and April. They might best be compared to oranges. They are green before they ripen and orange-yellow when ripe. Rançon claims that they are delicious. These fruits are eaten as they

222 chiefly in times of famine, but occasionally at other times also.
137 The silikoré fruits are not eaten among the Gourounsi and Bam-
261 bara.
252 Gonsé is called sofarangoni in Bambara. It is a shrub, the height of a man, that yields kéména. The latter is a pod containing small flat beans of a sort, very thin, that ripen at the time of the millet harvest. These /beans/ are boiled twice, and the water is discarded both times. Then they are washed in cold water and boiled again, for the last time, in a canari covered with a straw lid. Once this is done karité butter is added, and the mixture is eaten. Kéména
[435] is sold at market ready made. A handful is worth 5 cowries (1/2 centime). Kéména is also mixed with /true/ beans and either eaten or sold in this fashion.

Lamboye is called béré in Bambara, guidili in Peuhl. It is found almost everywhere in the Sudan. Its fruits, or rather seeds, are eaten only in times of famine. They are round, very /509/ tiny, and they ripen during the dry and warm season. They are gathered, laid out in the sun, and then crushed in a small mortar to break the outer membrane. Once this is done, they are soaked in water for eight days. This water is discarded, and the seeds are washed twice. Then they are boiled, salt is added, and they are eaten. This is done only in times of famine. These seeds are poisonous, as we can see, and would be toxic if they were not submitted to these various processes.

222 Sabatouli (bembé in Bambara and Sôninké) is a tree whose fruits
137 ripen one month after the first rains (that is, in May). The fruit is very tiny, no larger than a grain of maize. One eats it as it comes, when passing by or clearing land in the bush, or else one takes it to the village children. Nothing else is done with it. Sabatouli is found almost everywhere in the Sudan.

Vâka is a tree which is called goumou or goumbou in Bambara. The flowers of this tree, which are red, are used to make sauce when there is no gombo left. It is called fofo in Nounouma and Sissala, kafro in Kassouna. Its fruits are not eaten.

We overlooked the jujube tree above. It is called mourouga in Mossi, n'tomono in Bambara, gouésso in Nounouma and Kassouna. The Mossi eat the fruits only when traveling through the bush. The Gourounsi do not eat them at all.

326 Mossi blacksmiths make ouaka, koutiaga, axes, knives, daggers, swords, spearheads, arrowheads, razors, iron bracelets for women, men, nobles, spoons, horse bits, stirrups, spurs, etc. They also make needles of considerable thickness which are worth [435] 10 cowries apiece, or five for 1 sou.

During the winter season, they hardly make anything beside ouaka.[1] During the dry season, they make all the other items.

411 They also make zandé, or clubs with iron tips. Let us say
326 a word about clubs, which are in a way the Mossi national weapon. A Mossi would believe himself dishonored if he were not to bear a club solemnly on his right shoulder wherever he goes. Even small boys carry them, proportioned to size, and they do this with no less solemnity than their elders.

Mossi clubs are of three kinds:

1. Some made wholly of wood, handle and body both, and carved all of one piece. They are called dori.

2. Others whose handle is made of wood, but whose head consists of a large round stone imbedded at the tip of the handle. These clubs are called gougou.

3. Finally, the clubs with a wooden handle and an iron mallet inserted perpendicularly at the tip of the handle. These are the zandé or zann'dé. Sometimes the handle is covered with hide, and this makes it richer and more handsome.

326 Blacksmiths make only the iron part of the zandé. The other kinds of clubs are made by the owners themselves.

Blacksmiths only make zandé on order. While they make ouaka and koutiaga in advance and have them taken /514/ to market in quantities, they only make zandé when someone comes and asks for one.

The Mossi blacksmiths, therefore, work sometimes on order and sometimes to build up their stock. They sell this stock at market through their children, just as their wives go there to sell the pottery they manufacture.

325 The tools used by Mossi blacksmiths are as follows:
413 1. A small anvil called kissiguiré, with a pointed iron piece underneath, which can be held in the hand or thrust into the ground.

[1] [i.e. A kind of large hoe, see p. 32. —Analyst]

325 413 2. An iron mallet called zinré which is used as a hammer to strike the above-mentioned anvil. These items are very small. The anvil is held in one hand and the mallet in the other.

3. A pair of tongs (iéougo) to pick the iron from the fire and put it on the anvil.

4. A hammer called kouadara, made of a thick, short, and solid wooden handle into which a long and narrow iron mallet has been driven to make a hammer.

5. A rasp (sodara or chandara), slightly curved, and hafted to a wooden handle.

6. A sort of small wedge to cut the iron (kitéga). This wedge is placed on the piece of iron to be cut, and it is hit with the mallet.

7. A small-sized tool called karé that consists of a curved blade, 3 centimeters long by 2 wide, hafted to a short piece of wood. The karé is used to sharpen knives.

8. The goatskin bellows (zougoudou).

Such are the tools of the Mossi blacksmith which, incidentally, he makes himself.

325 435

The mallet is worth	5,000	cowries	(5 francs)
The anvil	10,000	"	(10 francs)
The hammer	1,000	"	(1 franc)
The nippers	700	"	(0.70 francs)
The rasp	500	"	(0.50 francs)
The iron wedge	200	"	(0.20 francs)
The sharpener	200	"	(0.20 francs)

323 The wives of Mossi blacksmiths make pottery. They are not the only ones to do this, as we shall see later, but they do it, at least in the special blacksmith's villages and quarters.

They make pottery with bérédo, that special black earth, a kind of clay we have already mentioned/in a previous chapter, not translated/. They crush and mash old canari and add this powder to the bérédo. This makes the pots stronger than if fresh bérédo were used. When the pots have been fashioned, the women leave them to dry in the sun for six or seven days. While this drying process is taking place, they gather firewood in the bush. Then they place a layer of wood in a round oven (about 1 1/2 meters high, very

326 In short, the blacksmith's profession is of greater consequence to him than anything else, although he avails himself of several other occupations.

[564] Mossi blacksmiths do not form a caste. That is to say, anyone can marry among them.

306 Let us proceed to the jewelers or copper workers (niaka in Mossi).
439 The Mossi have been familiar with copper for a long time, although West Africa does not produce it. The Yarsé have sought it at Ouanké, Kintampo, and even Kumasi from times immemorial. It comes from the coastal area, where it is brought by the Whites in the form of brass rods 30 or 40 centimeters long (like curtain rods). Nowadays, it is the British who supply the Gold Coast with copper, no doubt in the wake of the Portuguese and Dutch.

306 The niaka earns more money than the blacksmith. He buys the
301 copper rods from the Dioula and makes them into various items /517/ such as women's copper leggings adorned with crocodiles, and thick copper bracelets worn at the wrists and ankles by women and soroné (pages). Depending on their thickness, these bracelets sell for 2,500 [435] to 20,000 cowries. He also makes women's copper hairpins, and low-price rings worth from 100 to 200 cowries.

306 Prior to the arrival of the French, these jewelers also made
632 copper objects depicting everyday scenes, landscapes, huts. The chiefs bought them, but now these objects, at least the more ancient ones, have become very difficult to obtain. It seems that the German physician Frobenius, when he passed through Mossi territory at the end of 1908, acquired some very beautiful specimens of ancient Mossi manufacture for an exorbitant price. Nowadays, one [439] can imagine what the old industry was like by looking at the small items made at Ouagadougou by a few Europeanized Mossi who sell them on the spot for the benefit of local Whites. It might almost be said, therefore, that they manufacture them for export purposes. These items, made by the lost-wax process, are rather interesting and quite artistic for Blacks.

325 The tools of the niaka are about the same as those of the black-
306 smith:
413

1. The small portable anvil or kissiguiré.
2. The hammer or kouadara.
3. Shears (niougou) to pick copper pieces from the fire.

413
323
[317] In order to make this basin the potter takes a kind of earth called yaoré (the kind from large brown or greyish termite nests). He mixes it with straw and makes this kind of basin, this kind of primitive potter's wheel, called tébélé in Mossi.

2. A kind of short earth pestle, which is held in the fist and called toudoubila.

323
[428] In order to make his canari our potter takes some yarado. To obtain this kind of clay one must dig at certain spots which are handed down traditionally from father to son. He crushes it with /520/ his pestle in the basin, and then wets it and builds his canari with it, raising the canari like a house wall and making it revolve slowly before him. Incidentally, he only knows how to make small canari.

Those potters who make big jars excavate a sort of large basin in the ground. They use the same short and compact little pestle to work the clay of the canari they are building, but they use a different kind of yarado, the red or reddish kind.

● [435] Our potter sells his small canari for 80 to 120 cowries apiece. He makes them in quantities. People come to him to purchase them, or else he has his wife take them to market.

Skillful potters make four canari a day. Beginners only make two or three.

[435] Large canari are worth 300 cowries apiece.

Those potters who make small canari often make nothing else. Similarly, those who make large canari do not usually make any others. There are some potters who make both kinds, however, for example at Kombisiguiri.

In order to fire the pots, Mossi potters have large round ovens which I have already described. They are completely open at the top, like circular walls 1.50 meters high, with four holes at the bottom. The potters heap up millet stalks within, and lay four canari on top. Upon each of these canari they place others, until the pile reaches the top of the wall. Then they set the millet stalks afire and allow everything to cool off until the following morning.

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467 Every potter does not have his own oven. There is only one oven per quarter. The potters in each quarter get together to build a common oven behind the several soukala. If there are five potters,

323 the oven is built in one day. All those who cooperated in building
467 it have the right to use it.

323 At Kombisiguiri, some potters have no ovens. They merely spread out millet stalks on the ground and place the canari on top. They light the millet, and the pots are fired in this fashion.

/521/ It is the potter himself who makes his tools, his crude basin, and his pestle.

Let us point out that the baouré, huge jars where the threshed millet is stored and which are about 2.50 meters high and proportionately wide, which look like enormous sandstone ink bottles and which I saw in the northern part of Mossi territory, are not made by the potters. They are built in each soukala by the inhabitants.

After the potters come the pipe makers. It is the old women who make pipes among the Mossi. They fetch the appropriate clay,
● [435] fashion the bowl of the pipe, and fire it. They sell it for 5 cowries.

333 Let us not forget the bricklayers, who are called tammétéba in Mossi. Like Gourounsi bricklayers, Mossi ones are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. As among the Gourounsi, the bricklayers are not paid. They are merely fed for the duration of their work.

322 Following work with earth and clay, let us proceed to woodworking. It is represented among the Mossi by the koukouperséba and séta.

Among certain populations of West Africa, the woodworker's trade is exercised by the blacksmiths (for example, among the Malinké, Dialonké, etc.). Among the Mossi, as among the Gourounsi, it is sharply distinct from the blacksmith's trade and exercised by the koukouperséba, who are counterparts of the Gourounsi voguésara and Mandé debakala-lésemba. The koukouperséba make daba handles, axe handles, small chairs which are very nicely tooled with a hot iron and which represent a horse's back with two crude heads, two outlines of a head, on either side.

Actually, the koukouperséba are primarily cultivators. They work the soil during the rainy season. During the dry season, they make the various items just mentioned.

322 In addition to these people, there are the Laobé among the
563 Mossi, that is to say, /522/ those men who are employed by the

322 563 Foulbé as makers of wooden gourds and other items of a similar nature. The Mossi call them séta. Since there are many Foulbé in Mossi territory, there are Laobé also. Some of them have left their masters to settle independently, and they are now free.

May we present one, by the name of Louri. During the winter season he works the soil, although very slightly like all other Laobé and Foulbé, and he also makes wooden gourds. During the dry season, he only makes gourds. Owing to his very mediocre cultivating abilities, his trade nets him more than his fields.

His tools are as follows:

322 413 1. First, a large ax called diendé, which he uses to cut heavy timber.

2. The saotaré, a kind of well-sharpened hoe with a very short handle, which is used to fashion the gourd on the outside.

3. The tépotondé, a kind of hoe with a very short handle and a very sharp blade, which is used to hollow out the gourd.

4. The menkéré, which is also used to hollow out the inside of the gourd.

5. The kéfirga, a long-handled tool with a curved, sharp blade, which is used for the same purpose as the two preceding tools.

It is the blacksmith who makes the iron parts of these tools.

322 563 435 Their value is as follows:

The axe is worth	2,000 cowries
The saotaré is worth	500 "
The tépotondé is worth	500 "
The menkéré is worth	1,500 "
The kéfirga is worth	200 "

322 563 In order to make his gourds, our Laobé uses the wood of the following trees: hèdè, bouagaï, saboutoungaï, and bembé.

This Laobé comes from Badongo (a village located 31 kilometers from /523/ Ouagadougou). He has a wife and two children. [567] He is a former slave, a captive from Laobé, whose masters had settled at Badongo. The master left, and now he is free. Formerly he worked for his master, and now he works for himself. He makes gourds in advance and has them sold at market by his wife. He [435] sells the small ones for 100 cowries, the medium ones for 300, the large ones for 500 (0.10, 0.30, 0.50 franc).

322 As for plots, he cultivates a field of small millet, a little
563 maize around his hut, a few peanuts and underground peas.

His soukala consists of a single and lone hut where he lives with his wife and two children.

Here is another example of a Laobé or séta, this one living at Kombisiguiri. He has left the Foulbé to settle among the Mossi.

[413] His woodworking tools are the same as those we mentioned above: diendé, tépotondé, menkéré, saotaré, and kéfirga.

To make his gourds, he cuts down a whole tree, either hèdè
[313] or n'kouna, which yields the best wood, or bembé, sibi, or n'pékou, or else saboutoungaï, sanktougaï, or satantoulougaï, or finally bouagaï, which is less good. Gourds made of hèdè wood sell for more than others.

[435] He makes two kinds of gourds, small ones worth 50 cowries and large ones, some of which sell for up to 1,000 cowries. He makes his gourds without waiting for an order and has them taken to market by his wives.

Our Laobé does not work in the fields at all. From one end of the year to another, he makes his wooden gourds and they bring him enough to live on.

322 In addition, he makes mortars and pestles to crush grain. A
563 small mortar and pestle is worth 1,000 cowries, a large mortar
435 and pestle 2,000. He also makes large wooden spoons which he sells for 50 cowries, and clogs or wooden sandals of a sort which are worn during the rainy season and which he sells for 100 cowries.

/524/ There are eight people in his soukala, himself, his two wives, and his five children.

322 Let us add that a few, a very few, Mossi have begun to make wooden gourds like the Laobé, but contrary to the habits of the latter, they spend more time in the fields than at their trade. There are a few at Polsogo, a village located 12 kilometers from Ouagadougou. They must not be confused with the koukouperséba mentioned above.

There are also bow makers among the Mossi. They are called tempéséda. They are primarily cultivators, and their fields net them much more than their trade. They exercise the latter only for the purpose of getting a few cowries to buy condiments such as

322 salt, etc. Small bows are worth 20 cowries, medium ones 70, and [435] large ones 100.

285 We have just reviewed woodworking. Let us proceed to basketry. Here the latter gives rise to two major trades, the basket maker's and the hat maker's. Let us study them in turn.

As an example, here is Niandé Zango, a basket maker and head of a soukala. He has two wives and three children. His soukala numbers five huts.

He works in the fields during the winter season, and at his trade during the dry season. His fields bring him the larger returns.

He makes his baskets at home without waiting for an order, and he has his wives sell them at market.

He gets doudouma straw in the bush and cultivates mono in his maize field.

[314] Doudouma is a tall grass that is left to dry and that furnishes excellent straw for the manufacture of baskets and trays.

Doudoumidou is doudouma straw dyed red with mono.

249 386 285 Mono (faraoro in Bambara) is a plant grown by the Mossi in their maize fields, around the soukala. It looks a great deal like large red millet, but it is /525/ not the same thing. It is probably a variety of large millet, however. Mono is sown along with maize when the first rains begin to fall. Holes are made with the koutiaga, mono grains placed within and covered up. When mono has emerged from the ground, the weeds are pulled out. The harvesting is done about two and a half months after sowing. The stalks are severed at the base and left to dry in the sun, and then the sheaths and culms are torn off. The latter are the parts used to dye the straw red.

The sheaths and culms are crushed by rubbing them by hand in a canari full of water. Then the doudouma straw is left to soak in this canari. The canari is placed on the fire, where it is kept for six hours. When this is over, the straw, now dyed red, is removed.

386 285 Doudousabalé is doudouma straw dyed black by immersion in bérédo. The straw is gathered, taken to a watercourse, and buried in bérédo. It is left there for a whole day, and this gives it a shiny grey hue.

285 314 Gansacé is a gramineous plant that grows wild along the banks of watercourses. The natives do not cultivate it. Dried gansacé provides a kind of straw that is used in the manufacture of straw trays. The Foulbé settled in the area also use it in the manufacture of hats.

Boulouvaka is a shrub that grows along watercourses. The boulouvaka stem is sectioned in two or four, yielding small flexible twigs that are dyed black by immersion in bérédo. Once dyed, these twigs are used in the manufacture of Mossi baskets.

Koué is a tall gramineous plant that provides straw used in the manufacture of certain baskets. Koué grows wild all over the bush, in dry spots as well as watered areas.

Dana is a shrub the wood of which is used in the manufacture of the Mossi baskets made of koué straw. It grows everywhere in the bush.

Sepso, semso, semsoro or semsogo is the Mossi name for the bark filaments taken from the néré pods. /526/ They are used in making straw trays. Sepso may be dyed red with mono, or black with bérédo.

All these elements are used by basket makers in the manufacture of their baskets and straw trays.

285 435 Now, here are some samples of Mossi basketry:

1. Large yellow baskets made of koué straw. The rims are made of dana stalks. These baskets are sold at local markets for 250 cowries apiece. They are crude baskets used to carry millet or to bring it to horses. They are quadrangular and shaped like upside-down pyramids sectioned at the base.

2. Large deluxe baskets shaped like the above but distinct in that instead of being solid yellow, straw- yellow, they are multi-colored. They are made of koué straw (yellow), doudoumidou straw (red), and boulouvaka straw (black). They are worth about 1,500 cowries apiece.

3. Straw trays, straw dishes of a sort, made with doudouma (yellow) and doudoumidou (red). They sell for 250 cowries when small, 300 when large.

4. Ordinary straw dishes made with doudouma only (undyed straw). They are worth 150 cowries.

285 5. Straw dishes made with doudouma (yellow), doudoumidou
435 (red), and doudousabalé (shiny grey). They are worth 300 cowries.

6. Dishes made of gansacé straw (yellow) and doudoumidou straw (red) worth 250 cowries.

7. Dishes made of gansacé and sepso straw (sepso is dyed red with mono). The larger ones are worth 350 cowries, the smaller ones 250.

There are no basket makers at Ouagadougou proper, but there are many people in neighboring villages who work at this trade.

The basket maker's only tool is the lépéré-pime, a thick iron needle hooked at the head and adorned with small stripes, /527/ which serves to stitch the straw used for baskets and trays. The lépéré-pime is made by the blacksmith, and it is worth 50 cowries.

Gansacé is also used in the manufacture of bracelets, cords, and lids.

285 The maker of straw hats must be included with the basket
294 maker. Both trades belong together.

To present one of them, here is Tenda Ouidiraogo, a Mossi. He tills the soil during the rainy season, and he makes straw hats during the dry season.

Hats are made with kansé, a gramineous plant that grows along watercourses and ponds.

283 This grass is made into string. First it is placed in water to be
285 softened, and then it is sectioned into two sprigs which are also im-
294 mersed in water. They are rubbed and twisted by hand upon the thigh. The two sprigs coil together and make string that is fairly strong, although breakable by hand.

First, enough of this string is prepared for the manufacture of a hat.

285 The hat makers have a sort of block called dogoma, made of
294 a tripod stick with a vertical stem. They use it to make their hats, which are the ordinary pointed straw hats common to all of West Africa, and which are found in the Sudan as well as in Guinea. These hats come way down on the back of the neck and make their wearers look like Calabrian bandits. It must be said, however, that among the Mossi there is another type of straw hat, which is swollen, rounded, and partly covered with leather patches. It is

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294 closer to our European hats and vaguely recalls a very fat and swollen straw bowler with wide rims.

In order to make the former kind, our hat maker begins by bringing together a hundred strings. He ties them at one end, an end left in its original straw state, and thus fashions the tip of the hat. Then he interlaces these strings by hand with bits of unmodified kansé straw. The strings hang vertically, the straw pieces are interlaced horizontally, and this makes up the web of the hat.

[386] /528/ The bits of kansé are often dyed black beforehand by immersion in the mud of a watercourse. This is how black lines and designs are obtained in certain parts of the hat.

[435] Six days are needed to make a hat. It is sold for 1,000 cowries, of course without the ornaments, straps, and strips of leather that will be added by the shoemaker.

Hat makers fashion these hats in advance and have their wives well them at market.

248 Bérenga or hemp (also called tamora among the Mossi) goes into the manufacture of straw hats as well. We saw above, when discussing cultivation, how bérenga is grown. It is sown either among maize or among large red millet, that is to say around the soukala, or even in fields in the bush among small millet or large white millet. If sown among maize, it is sown three days afterwards; if among large red millet, four days later; if among large white millet, ten days later; and if among small millet, ten or twelve days afterward.

Bérenga is harvested ten or twenty days after maize, if it stands in a maize field. If it has been sown among millet, it is harvested seven days afterwards. Bérenga stalks are severed at the base, and the fibrous bark is removed and dried. Bérenga is green when fresh and reddish brown when dry. It is usually made into strings and cords. It is also used for the thatch roofing of huts. When it is to go into
285 294 the making of a hat, it is dyed black by immersion in bérédo and used along with kansé to furnish the black lines of the hats.

Here are some sample products of the Mossi hat-making industry:

1. Pointed straw hats made of kansé (yellow) and bérenga (black). They sport leather ornaments and straps added by the
[435] shoemaker. They are worth 2,500 cowries.

285 294 435 2. Similar but smaller hats, worth from 1,000 to 1,500 cowries.

/529/ 3. Round straw hats with wide brims, mentioned above. These are worth 1,700 cowries.

285 All the leather parts on those hats are added by the shoemaker.

294 241 We have already mentioned that our hat makers are not exclusively manufacturers, that they also till the soil. It must be added that the latter activity nets them more than their trade. The man I mentioned cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet in the bush. He also grows maize, peanuts, and underground peas around his soukala. He owns neither large nor small livestock, but only chickens.

285 294 592 In his soukala he has two wives, four children, two married brothers who have one wife apiece but no children, and two unmarried brothers, as well as a father. They all make hats.

He lives at Saponé, where there are many hat manufacturers.

282 294 [564] After straw work, let us mention leatherwork.

Mossi shoemakers do not form a caste. Anyone who wants to may marry among them, and anyone who wishes to do so may exercise their trade.

[592] As an example, here is Kinoga Kologo, a Mossi, and the head of a soukala. He lives with two wives, two children, and an unmarried brother. His soukala consists of three huts.

His tools are as follows:

282 294 413 1. The pongo, a kind of broad little knife with a flaring blade hafted to a very short handle. It is used to cut hide.

2. The gansiouba, a wooden knife used to scrape and rub hides, clean them and smooth them.

3. The désara, a small tool with a wooden handle and a curved iron stem. It is used red hot to trace designs on hides.

4. The pime, a small awl used to sew hides.

5. The large tirisiga. This is an iron seal used to imprint hides with small circles.

6. The small tirisiga. This is a smaller seal, /530/ an iron rod whose tip makes a very tiny seal.

282 294 435 As among nearly all Blacks, the Mossi shoemaker is his own tanner. He buys sheepskins and goatskins at market (small ones

282 sell for 200 cowries, large ones for 400). He leaves them to soak
294 in a large canari with yogré seeds for twelve hours. Then he re-
435 moves the hair by hand, washes the skin thoroughly, and places it again in a canari with seeds of pélanaga (a tree that grows in the bush). He washes and rubs the hide with these seeds. Then he leaves it to dry in the sun after covering it with butter, real butter rather than karité butter. The skin may then be used to make various items.

Kinoga also buys cowhide at market to make sandals. One cowhide is worth 3,000 cowries. He puts it in a large canari where he leaves it soaking for three days, then he takes it out, removes the hair with a knife, and strikes the skin with a small stick to soften it. Whatever amount of leather is needed to make sandals is then removed from the hide, which is used up gradually as the need arises.

The shoemaker's tools are made by the blacksmith. These tools are worth 100 cowries apiece, except for the awl that is worth 20 and the wooden knife that is made by the shoemaker himself and worth 50. All of the shoemaker's tools taken together are thus worth 470 cowries, or only 50 centimes.

Our shoemaker makes the following items:

1. Sandals, first and foremost. The most expensive ones are worth 2,500 cowries a pair, the less expensive ones 1,500 cowries.

2. Leather grigris, bracelets, pouches, etc. The pouches are worth 100 cowries, the bracelets 50. He only makes them on order. It must be said that other shoemakers stock them up beforehand and have them taken to market.

Of course, what the shoemaker prepares is the physical part of the grigri, its outer covering. It is not he who gives the grigri its power, its soul.

3. Kinoga does not make satchels, goatskin bags, but other shoemakers do.

[415] /531/ There are goatskins used to store millet. Large ones are worth 1 franc and small ones 0.50 franc. Then, there are goatskins used to hold water. They are worth from 0.30 to 1 franc. Finally, there are small goatskins used as purses or coin bags and worth 0.20 franc.

[372] 4. Shoemakers also make leather cases for strike-a-light steel
[326] (200 cowries) and for needles (50 cowries). Both strike-a-light steel and needles are made by blacksmiths.

282 294 435 and needles are made by blacksmiths. A strike-a-light steel is worth 200 cowries.

5. They make sheaths for knives and swords. Knife sheaths are worth 200 cowries, sword sheaths 3,000.

6. Bridles and saddles. Saddles are worth 3,000 cowries, bridles 5,000.

Shoemakers also work with deerskin and leopardskin. They adorn Mossi truncheons or clubs with leopardskin. They also adorn spears with it. The leopardskin is provided by the customer. The shoemaker does not purchase it directly.

Leopardskin is sold at market in small pieces worth 100 cowries. A large leopardskin is worth 10 francs, a small one 7 francs.

Crocodile skin is also used by shoemakers. People who have killed a crocodile go and sell its skin at market, or else someone purchases the skin from the hunter and retails it at market. The skin of a small crocodile (hardly any but these are to be found in Mossi territory, owing to the scarcity of water) is worth 1,000 cowries. People who wish the shoemaker to work one of these skins purchase it at market and take it to him.

282 294 There are no hippopotamus skins in Mossi territory, because water is scarce and watercourses are small. As for elephant skin, it is too tough to be worked and remains unused.

282 294 241 The shoemaker I am describing exercises his trade only during the dry season. During the rainy season he tills the soil, and this nets him more than his trade. /532/ The same thing applies, incidentally, to all Mossi shoemakers. During the winter season, our man cultivates a field of small millet and one of large red millet, a small rice field, and a little maize around his soukala. He plants beans in his two millet fields. He owns neither large nor small livestock, not even a chicken or a dog.

There are no makers of headcrests among the Mossi, and the Boussouma chief I questioned about it told me there never were any.

286 Let us now proceed to the cotton industry, and study in turn the weaver's, tailor's and dyer's trades.

The Mossi weaver (soulouga) is a weaver-cultivator. He tills the soil during the rainy season and exercises his trade during the dry season. In fact he is primarily a cultivator, for cultivation rather than weaving comes first and foremost to him.

286 There may be five weaver-cultivators in a small village, or fifteen in a large one.

286 283 Customers bring the weaver the cotton thread spun by their wives, for spinning is a family affair. The women spread out the tufts of raw cotton on a small board and extract the seeds by pressing upon them. Then they spin small quantities of cotton between their fingers and thus make it into threads which they coil around a twig. The threads are handed to the weaver in this form.

286 The weaver uncoils the threads and sets them on his loom, which is very primitive. It is the same one used throughout West Africa, and it is called niri in Mossi. The cotton strips are usually from 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Their length, which is quite variable, may reach 50 meters. The weaver makes his loom himself.

Let us present an Ouagadougou weaver, Beïdou Ninkéma, the head of a soukala. He has two wives and no children. He tills the soil during the rainy season and weaves during the dry season. His fields net him more than his trade, because the Yarsé also work at the weaver's trade, and since they are more skillful at it than the Mossi their competition is formidable. /533/ The customers bring him thread, and he makes it into cotton strips. He is paid 500 [435] cowries to make the strips needed for a skirt. Sixty strips are needed to make one skirt.

[294] Our weaver is also a tailor, but only on occasion, and incidentally a tailor of the lowest order for he can only make skirts and cloaks. [435] He cannot make trousers. He makes a cloak for 0.50 franc, a skirt for 0.20 franc, with the fabric supplied, of course.

286 857 291 Let us add that child-weavers are also to be found among the Mossi. They make pétala.

"Pétala," says the Cahier des Rapports of the circle /of Ouagadougou/, "are small, very narrow strips, from 10 to 25 millimeters wide, made of multicolored threads, yellow, red, blue, green, etc., dyed in the territory and woven by children on simplified looms.

"Those strips, which are very strong, are used as trouser belts.

[435] "Pétala is worth a little under 0.10 franc a meter, and its sale nets a small profit to the children who make it and who sell it themselves on Mossi markets.

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291 "This kind of braiding is not exported."

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563 There are tailors as well as weavers among the Mossi. The tailor's trade, incidentally, is exercised in Mossi lands not only by the Mossi but also by the Yarsé and by some of the Haoussa who are settled in the territory.

294 Mossi tailors till the soil during the winter season and work as tailors during the dry season. Their fields net them more than their trade.

Most Mossi tailors do custom work. Cotton strips are brought to them, and they sew them into the required garment. Others purchase cotton strips, make them into various garments (skirts, cloaks, trousers, caps) and have their wives sell them at market. Those, however, are in the minority.

A cloak is called fougou in Mossi, a skirt fougoupoko from poko, "woman" and fougou, "cloak." Trousers are called koulouga.

/534/ Let us add that garment manufacture has remained a family industry in much of Mossi territory. Many Mossi can sew, and they make their own clothes by sewing up cotton strips. Let [462] us note here that as in nearly all of West Africa, it is the men who sew rather than the women. In this area of Africa, indeed, sewing is essentially a male occupation rather than a female one.

Now to present a Ouagadougou tailor, Mohammadi Bagaré.

He tills the soil and does nothing else during the winter season. He exercises his tailor's trade during the dry season.

He does custom work. Those who want a garment bring him cotton strips in sufficient numbers, and he makes the requested gar- [435] ment. He asks 1,000 cowries to make a large cloak, 500 for a small one, 200 for a skirt. To make a cap he asks only for one kola nut, which is worth 50 cowries at Ouagadougou. He takes 200 cowries for a pair of trousers.

It takes him five days' work to make a large cloak, two days for a small one, one day for a skirt, two days for a pair of trousers, one hour for a cap.

[412 His only working tool is the needle. Mohammadi uses European
439] needles.

386 There are dyers as well as weavers and tailors among the Mossi.
177 "Dyer" is garalosadaba in Mossi, from gara, "indigo" and sadaba, "maker." There are no dyers in the southern part of Mossi territory but only in the north, from Ouagadougou upward. This would tend to prove that just as the Mossi probably learned cotton weaving from the Yarsé, they must have learned the dyer's craft from the Songhay, with whom they have had contact toward the north. Actually, Songhay emigrants have established villages in the northern part of the Ouagadougou circle, and the dyer's craft is their chief industry. This strongly corroborates our theory. Let us add that /535/ the Mossi practice dyeing in certain places, at certain spots, so to speak. One may not find a single dyer in a large number of Mossi villages, and then all at once come upon a locality with thirty dyers' wells, such as Yakki for example.

386 To present a Ouagadougou dyer, here is a Mossi by the name
249 of Gomdounguiba Nangakoré. He does not himself cultivate indigo. He buys it at market in loaves or balls. Anyone may grow indigo among the Mossi (see the section on cultivation above). When it
[435] is ripe, the leaves are gathered, heaped in a wooden gourd, and pressed to make loaves worth 50, 100, or 500 cowries. The dyer buys the loaves at market.

386 He dyes either cotton threads or strips, or even garments (cloaks, etc.). The item to be dyed is brought to him. In short, he usually does custom work.

Sometimes, nevertheless, he buys thread, strips, cloaks, or skirts, dyes them, and has them sold at market by his wife or wives.

Every dyer sinks a dyeing well outside, but right beside, his soukala. He makes a neatly squared hole, quadrangular, about 60 centimeters long by 60 wide and 1 meter deep. This hole is tamped carefully several times, and the clay walls are polished with water prepared with néré bark. Finally, water is poured in to see whether it is watertight. About three days are needed to make one of those wells. Every dyer has one.

In order to dye thread, strips or garments, millet-stalk ashes are placed in water, strained, and tossed to the bottom of the dyeing hole. Then come the ashes of a tree called gouara by the Mossi (the ashes themselves are called zato or iato). They are laid

386 at the bottom of the hole. A loaf of indigo is added, and then water. The ingredients are left to blend for three days, and then the thread, strips, etc., may be immersed.

The coloring mixture is replaced every twenty days. It leaves at the bottom of the dyeing well a sort of yellow-grey crust which is removed and allowed to dry in the sun. Once dry, it /536/ is reduced to powder and added to the next mixture.

Cotton threads, in order to be dyed, are immersed in the mixture and crumpled with the fingers. At nighttime they are removed and left to dry on the hut roof. The dyeing is resumed on the morrow. At the end of three days, the threads are black. Only two days are needed to obtain dark-blue threads, and one day is sufficient for light-blue threads. The same applies to cotton strips and garments.

Our dyer does not exercise his trade during the winter season. At that time, he undertakes nothing but cultivation. It is during the dry season that he is a dyer. He claims, however, that his trade nets him more than his fields.

386 To dye cotton threads he asks 200 cowries to dye a bundle black, 435 from 60 to 100 to dye it dark blue, or 50 cowries to dye it light blue.

When he buys a cloak to dye it (he buys it for 1,500 cowries, for example) he resells it dyed black for 3,000 cowries, dark blue for 2,000, or light blue for 1,700.

386 Mossi fabrics are as follows:

435 1. White or off-white fabric, undyed. It is called pempéla. It is worth 25 cowries a cubit, that is, the length from the elbow to the tip of the fingers.

2. The white fabric with blue strips called nakoré. It is made of white threads and threads dyed blue. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

3. The fabric with small blue and white checks called arkilla. It is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

4. The dark-blue fabric with scattered white stripes. It is called ganga, and it is worth 50 cowries a cubit.

5. Finally, the blue fabric with blue and white stripes called oulambala or oulambalé, which costs 75 cowries or one sou and a half a cubit.

727 Only the sons of the two warring chiefs were spared. They were returned to their families for ransom. The women were also spared and returned to their husbands in exchange for other women or livestock. If their husbands did not come and claim them, the conquerors took them as wives and not as slaves.

567 Let us say a few words about the price of a slave. A man was worth 40, 000 cowries; a woman, 50, 000 or 60, 000; a young man, 435 50, 000; a young girl, 80, 000. We can see that the qualities most valued were, on the one hand, membership in the female sex and, on the other hand, youth.

567 4. Name. A slave is called yemba in Mossi (pl., yembése) when no distinction is made between the sexes. When a male slave is meant, /265/ the word yembraogo is used (yembraodo or yembrâdo in the plural). For a female slave, one uses yempoka (yempokosé in the plural).

5. Kinds of slaves. The yembraogo, once bought or captured, was placed in irons, or to put it more precisely, irons were fastened to his feet in order to prevent him from escaping, but leaving him free to work. These irons were left on him for two or three years. When it was certain that he would not run away, the irons were removed. He spent all his time working for his master during the cultivating season, or he worked the small private fields belonging to his master's wives. In return, he was clothed and fed at all times. He could be resold, and this was done if there was dissatisfaction with him or his work.

If the master was satisfied with him, he bought him a wife. Then the slave became a bingo man, a "bingo," and was no longer a yembraogo. He passed from the status of a captive by trade or war to that of a house slave. Bingo is the name given to house slaves among the Mossi of Yatenga. At Ouagadougou they are called daparé or deporé (poré or paré meaning "back"); the daparé or daporé is the man who walks behind his master, the attendant, the slave. The bingo could not be resold except in unusual circumstances, such as when he committed fornication with his master's wife.

[592] When the master had but a few of them, the bingo lived in the same compound, with a door of their own leading outside. When there was a number of them, they had a small compound next to the one of the family.

During the season of cultivation, the bingo worked for his master two days out of three. During the dry season, he also worked for him

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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relationship between the people and their chiefs. One of the principal contributing factors was the demand of the French administration that Mossi country not only share in the over-all development of French West Africa, but pay for its own administration as well. The resources of Mossi country were largely limited to agricultural production and stock raising, however, and revenue from these activities was slight. The full weight of administrative expenses thus fell on the Mossi people. Apparently, the first taxation was of a collective nature, for according to the official government report for June 1899, "No regular tax has been levied, but taxes have been collected from the Mogho Naba and the other chiefs."[9]

Decrees of July and November, 1903, authorized "native chiefs to collect taxes, and granted them a commission on the tax yield to arouse their interest in the regular payment of taxes."[10] Accustomed as they were to giving taxes (gifts) to their rulers with the knowledge that subordinate chiefs would extract a share before sending the remainder up the hierarchy, the Mossi were not averse to paying taxes through their traditional rulers to the "new chiefs," the French administration. However, when taxes grew to excessive proportions and chiefs continued to get a percentage, the people accused their rulers of cheating them. The reasons for the Mossi complaints about taxation are described by Tauxier, himself an administrator:

> This tax, light at first, has grown rapidly over the last few years. In 1906 it was 311,000 francs for the territory of Ouagadougou, which had a population of 861,000 inhabitants. In 1907, the tax was raised to 360,000 francs; in 1909, to 555,000 *francs*; and in 1910, to 656,000 francs. Furthermore, from 1908 onward this tax was exacted with such rigor and on such short notice that it was exactly as though the amount had been tripled. Under the circumstances, the Mossi were compelled to resort to trade in order to obtain the French money they did not have, since the local currency is the cowry and the French administration does not wish to receive it. . . . To meet this difficult situation the Mossi now organize small caravans in the villages, and send the young men to Wankie to sell cattle, sheep, goats, asses, horses, and bolts of cotton. They bring back with them either French money or kola nuts.[11]

Many Mossi had a great deal of difficulty in securing French currency. Mangin, a White Father who arrived in Mossi country in 1904, writes:

> The Europeans who live among the Mossi, including all the riflemen and circle guards, do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces that are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10,000 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this charm which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. At the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries.[12]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi." Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.[4] The last caravan route that Barth reported ran from:

> Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu, and reported that to this market:

> The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, Kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859 : III, 203–4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887–8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as livestock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(4) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc, 1969, agrees with Barth.

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It is clear that the volume of this trade could not have been enlarged since the French conquest which, as we know, had disrupted Mossi society. Therefore our conclusion must be that it must have existed prior to the coming of the Europeans.

The caravaneers used cowries and cloth as trade currency and in some cases even bartered one type of commodity for another. Cowries appear to have been the chief currency used and came close to being used for all purposes. Evidence for the use of cloth as currency comes from Barth and Marc. Barth met a trader who had

> ... a good quantity of the gabaga, or cotton strips, of Mosi with him, which form the staple currency in the whole tract of country from Libta to Timbuktu, ten Dr'a being reckoned equal to one hundred shells. (Barth 1859 : III, 198)

The big rolls of cotton cloth which Marc saw being loaded by Mossi caravaneers were said by them to serve the purpose of buying food ("They are for eating") in regions where cloth was the necessary currency (Marc 1909 : 172 f.n.). The traders apparently resorted to barter whenever and wherever they could or when their currency was in short supply. This appears to have been the case when Binger visited the Mossi in 1888. Cowries were then in short supply and the people were using slaves, valued at 50,000 to 65,000 cowries apiece, to obtain goods. Horses could be bought for as many as two or four slaves apiece. Traders apparently kept the cowry equivalence in mind when using other commodities to barter with, but we cannot be sure of this since Binger himself, and not the traders, may have been conscious of the equivalence (Binger 1892 : II, 498).

The prices which the traders paid and received for their goods differed greatly from place to place, according to the season of the year and over a span of several years. The earliest price data are given by Barth for the 1850's:

> As regards Selga [Salaga], the district to which the Hausa traders go for their supply of this article, three points are considered essential to the business of the Kola trade; first, that the people of Mosi bring their asses; secondly, that the Tonawa, or natives of Asanti, bring the nut in sufficient quantities; and thirdly, that the state of the road is such as not to prevent the Hausa people from arriving. If one of these conditions is wanting, the trade is not flourishing. The price of the asses rises with the cheapness of the guro [kola nut]. The average price of an ass in the market of Selga is 15,000 [cowry] Shell: While in Hausa the general price does not exceed 5,000. But the fataki, or native traders, take only as many asses with them from Hausa as are necessary for transporting their luggage, as the toll, or

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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fitto, levied upon each ass by the petty chiefs on the road is very considerable. From 5,000 to 6,000 guro, or kola nuts, constitute an assload.

Selga, the market place for this important article, being, it appears, a most miserable town, where even water is very scarce and can only be purchased at an exorbitant price, the merchants always manage to make their stay here as short as possible, awaiting the proper season in Yendi, a town said to be as large as Timbuktu, or in Kulfela, the great market place of Mosi; and they are especially obliged to wait in case they arrive at the beginning of the rainy season, there being no kola nuts before the latter part of the Kharif. The price of this nut in Timbuktu varies from 20 to 100 shells each, and it always constitutes a luxury; so that, even on great festivals, alms consisting of this article are distributed by the rich people of the town. (Barth 1859 : II, 364)

The other data we have on prices paid for goods come from the period between 1890 and 1910, at which time French francs had been introduced. At this time the official value of one franc was 1,000 cowries. Around 1904, a trader paid about 50 francs or 50,000 cowries for a head of cattle in Mossi country and sold it for about double the price at Salaga. With the proceeds of this transaction he bought kola nuts at the rate of one franc or 100 cowries per hundred. Thus with the sale of one cow a trader could obtain 10,000 kolas, these being valued at about 500 francs or 500,000 cowries in Mossi country and at 20 or 200 cowries each at Sarfere and Timbuktu (Marc 1909 : 173–4). At Timbuktu about this same period, 1895, traders could buy salt at about 30 francs for a slab weighing between 60 and 100 pounds and sell it for 45 francs at Sarafere, for 60 francs at Djenne, for between 70 and 80 francs at San, and "thus progressively more until they reached Mossi country" (Dubois 1899 : 276). In 1910, Mossi traders bought cattle for about 40 to 100 francs, horses for about 90 francs, donkeys for 25 francs, and so on, and sold these animals in Salaga for three times the prices. There they bought kolas at 2 Fr. 50 per thousand, and sold them at 20 per thousand at Leo on the Mossi border, 35 francs per thousand at Wagadougou, 50 francs at Wahigouya, 60 francs at Saravere, and 100 francs per thousand at Timbuktu. Here these traders bought bars of salt weighing about 75 pounds for between 10 and 12 francs a piece, and sold them for between 40 to 60 francs at Wahigouya, and for from 80 to 100 francs a piece at Dedougou and points as far down as Wagadougou (Tauxier 1917 : 221).

Not all the profit from this trade went into the pockets of the traders. We have the report of Binger that the chiefs, besides commandering the goods at less than one-hundredth their purchase price, received taxes on each caravan which passed through their territory.

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territory. This report is substantiated by Barth. Marc adds that the caravaneers had

> . . . a considerable amount of incidental expenses. Ten thousand kolas called for two asses or four porters for whom it was necessary to provide food during close to two months. Formerly there had been a certain number of local exactions to pay each time that the caravans crossed a new country. Now there are taxes on the caravans in the Gold Coast and also in French territory. It is also necessary to pay for ferryman who transports the livestock across the Volta [River]. There are risks, and occasionally cattle, fatigued by the trip, arrive in such bad shape that they are sold more cheaply than they had cost. Finally, the realization of profits is often difficult, the kola market being, in the commercial centers of the Mossi, subject to considerable fluctuations at the time when the caravans return. (Marc 1909 : 174)[7]

Sometimes the caravaneers made extensive use of middlemen and did not realize all the profits. Marc, who was stationed at the customs post at Leo on the Mossi border with the Gold Coast, wrote:

> The livestock is bought upon arrival by interpreter-brokers, middlemen between the butchers and the meat merchants, to whom the caravaneers are practically forced to resort. These men buy all the kola nuts brought by the forest natives, and control the market prices . . . These interpreter-brokers apparently speculate on livestock in a most curious way. They have scouts who go out to meet the caravans, sometimes two days' march to the north. These scouts attempt to alarm the travellers with tendentious remarks, until they are willing to cede their herds at a low price. Some times, at the height of the business season—that is, in January and February—the livestock prices may fluctuate by one hundred per cent within a few weeks. The Mande-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarse and Mossi in politeness, the Hausa in friendliness. In reality, there is here, an embryonic trading center, a veritable stock exchange, using extensively indigenous methods. ((Marc 1909 : 173)

According to most reports, all the larger market centers of Mossi country were like this.

Caravan centers, like all the lesser market centers in Mossi country, provided merchants not only with trading opportunities but also with occasions for conviviality after hectic days of travel. At Dakay south of Wagadougou, livestock traders found musicians, singers, and the most beautiful dancers in the country. And according to Marc, during the whole caravan season the market was abundantly furnished with beer (Marc 1909 : 175). But if the Mossi enjoyed themselves at

(7) Tauxier (1912 : 599) states that each porter was paid 35 francs for the thirty-five days of travels or at the rate of one franc per day. In addition a caravaneer spent about 300 cowries a day on food for each of his bearers.

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such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

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175 436 437 Cowries used to be chief medium of exchange in Mossi markets until the Europeans arrived. In addition the people bartered specific goods for other products. The prices of goods in these markets fluc- 175 435 tuated from time to time. Prices were highest during the planting season when most goods were scarce, and lowest during the harvest periods, but we have little precise information about the prices of goods in the traditional markets. Even Barth's information is too sketchy to deal with. Our first reliable data come from Tauxier, whose writings cover the first decade (1896-1906) of the conquest. Using the then official rate of one franc equals 1,000 cowries, the prices of a few representative products were: horses, 40 to 100 francs (40,000 to 100,000 cowries); cattle, 30 to 40 francs (30,000 to 40,000 cowries); chickens, 250 cowries; guinea fowls, 250 to 300 cowries; hides, 3,000 cowries; pottery jars, 300 cowries; cotton trousers, 200 cowries; baskets, 1,500 cowries; and locust-bean balls, 100 cowries (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.).

Mangin, whose work covers the period from about 1910 to 1913, when the value of the franc was lowered to one franc equals 700 to 800 cowries, lists the approximate prices for the following goods: "Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; *fabirama*, 0.05 franc a kilogram; shea butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer *(tose)*, containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel *(bese)*, 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average goat, 3 to 4 francs; large goat, 8 to 10 francs; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs, for an ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; small cow (no hump), 50 francs; zebu cow, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; cow skin, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc apiece; one hoe, about 0.60 franc; cloth: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo-dyed blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; medium-sized shirt, 2.50 francs" (Mangin 1921 : 53). In dealing with these prices, a number of things should be kept in mind: first of all, these prices fluctuated very much during the year; secondly [436] they varied from region to region within the country; and thirdly, although these prices are given in francs during this period, it was still possible to use cowries to buy a large number of the products.

177 436 [437] [438] Enormous changes have taken place in the Mossi economic and exchange systems over the decades following the studies of Tauxier and Mangin. Even before, but certainly after World War I, the French pressure on the Mossi to pay taxes in francs finally resulted

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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common concensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansara* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61-62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc piece which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

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use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 3 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lenga* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my auditors. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices changed.

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changed. I remain ignorant of what the real facts are, but still suspect that it may be possible to speculate on the system.

Barter is very specific in Mossi markets in the sense that not every product can be bartered against every other product. Some days rice would be bartered for cotton, and on other days only for peanuts and vice versa. It is not possible either to exchange vegetable produce for livestock, even though livestock may be exchanged for livestock. Sometimes people take chickens or guinea hens to market to exchange for goats or sheep, and often these animals are exchanged for young cattle. What is not at all clear, however, is whether or not the people see the value of the things exchanged in terms of currency value, or in terms of some value which has no reference to the European currency system. The ordinary people in the markets, like ordinary people everywhere, are not concerned with these problems as long as they believe that they are conducting their commercial activities with equity and are deriving satisfaction from them.

The most significant feature of all the Mossi markets is the segregation of certain merchants into certain areas. The makers and sellers of one product are found only in one part of the market, and anyone wishing to buy or sell these products must go to the place where they are traded. The other type of segregation is by reference to the trader's place of origin. For example, a woman who sells beer would be found in the section of the market where beer is sold, but she would be found sitting with her back towards the village or facing toward the direction from which she came. There are often some variations on this pattern. For example, if there are a large number of traders with one type of product, they will form a large open circle in which each person will sit with his or her back towards the point of origin. Inside of this circle, and separated by a few feet, would be another circle of people selling another product with their faces toward the general direction from which they came. Sitting with their backs to the people of this circle would be other people forming another circle and selling one type of product. These people would have their backs towards the region from which they came. When the group of persons selling one type of product is very small, they may form a small circle in a corner of the market with their backs towards their points of origin. All of these patterns often exist simultaneously in Mossi markets, but it is obvious that two basic configurations prevail. One configuration is in terms of goods, and facilitates trading. The other configuration is a social one and facilitates the social interaction which is an integral part of the Mossi market. This seating pattern makes it easier to find one's friends, to converse and drink with them, to find someone through whom to send mes-

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat: Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.